FY 2020
SMALL NEPA PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Please **do not leave any field BLANK**.

Submit form electronically (as Word doc) to james.chynoweth@usda.govby November 7, 2020.

(NOTE: Italicized / red comments are for reference only. You can delete them after completing the form.)

Project Name	Bagley Creek Placer Exploration
District Name (or "Forestwide")	Red River
County(-ies) where project located?	Idaho
FS Personnel Name, Phone Number and Email *If a partnership, please add name, phone and email; however,**an FS employee MUST BE the project proponent** and point of contact.*	Marty Jones, martin.jones@usda.gov (208) 553-1311 (cell)
Legal Location *Township(s), Range(s), and Section(s) of project.*	T29N, R6E, Sections 6,7, Boise Meridian
Decision Maker's Name District Ranger/Line Officer*responsible for signing the decision document*	Terry Nevius
Is the project associated with meeting a Forest target?	No

Which CE Category does this project fit? *Provide citation: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(x)* *Categorical Exclusion categories can be found here: FSH1909.15_30_Amend-2018-1_CEs* *See ** below regarding 220.6(d)(x) projects.*	36CFR220.6(e)8 (8) Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads. Examples include, but are not limited to: (i) Authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes, temperature gradient holes, or seismic shot holes; (ii) Gathering geophysical data using shot hole, vibroseis, or surface charge methods; (iii) Trenching to obtain evidence of mineralization; (iv) Clearing vegetation for sight paths or from areas used for investigation or support facilities; (v) Redesigning or rearranging surface facilities within an approved site; (vi) Approving interim and final site restoration measures; and (vii) Approving a plan for exploration which authorizes repair of an existing road and the construction of1/3mile of temporary road; clearing vegetation from an acre of land for trenches, drill pads, or support facilities.

****A Project Record and written Decision are not required for projects using a 36 CFR 220.6 (d)category, except at the Decision Maker's discretion.**

IF*being submitted under36 CFR 220.6 (d) category,*does the Decision Maker want a written Decision?
Yes No

Provide names and mailing addressesand/or email addressesof the individuals, groups, agencies, etc.to be included (other thanthose listed below*) for *Scoping*.

- DO NOT leave this box blank: **If no additional individuals are to be *externally scoped* please enter NA**.

Ray Fridley
1002 Main St
Culdesac, ID 83524

** The following have requested to receive scoping information via hard copy (postal mailings) for all projects: Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee,Stan Burt, James Colantino, Mike Cook, Friends of the Clearwater, and Penny Keck.*

Does the Decision Maker want a Legal Notice published in the Lewiston Tribune*?Yes_X__ No ___

If yes, the scoping period will start the day after the Legal Notice is published.
If no, the scoping period will start ~4 days after the date the scoping letters are sent via postal mailing.

**** A legal notice is not required for CE projects.***

The scoping period will be 14 days unless the Decision Maker wants to change it. ____ Days

What Level of Analysis (below) does the Decision Maker want for the Project?

_____ **Low level:**Choose this level if the project's level of public scrutiny is expectedto be relatively low or unknown. Documentation for low level analysis projects would be a completed Extraordinary Circumstances checklist filled out by the specialists, including the name of the specialist who performed the analysis, the project name, and date it was completed. No other written documentation would be generated.

__X__ **Moderate level:**Choose this level if the project's level of public scrutiny is expected to be relatively moderate to high. In this case, specialists would complete the Extraordinary Circumstances checklist with the only write up being for resources that are present and the rationale for the effects call. No write up wouldbe givenfor items in the checklist that are not present.

If the determination is no effect (which most CE's should have zero to very little adverseeffects), then document *why* that determination was made in one paragraph or less. If the determinationis an adverse effect, then *why* that determination was made would be written in less than three paragraphs.

List the Management Area(s) in which your project is located.
12C

What are the Management Area(s)' Goals and Standards* ***relevant to your project?***

A. Description

Management Area 12 consists primarily of forested lands. Timber productivity classes 3, 4, 5, and 6 are represented as are a variety of commercially valuable, softwood tree species. A variety of physical and biological environments occur as determined by soil, slope, aspect, elevation (approximately 3,800-6,500 feet), and climatic factors. This management area occurs across the entire nonclassified portion of the Forest. Although this management area consists primarily of productive forest land, there are minor inclusions of nonforest and low productivity forest lands.

There is no specific management direction for minerals related activity within this management area, however forest wide management direction for minerals states:

" Mineral resource activities will be administered under the appropriate laws and regulations to insure protection of surface resources while not unduly interfering with mining operations. Exploration and development of mineral resources will be facilitated by providing timely responses to Notices of Intent and Operating Plans. Emphasis will be put on working actively with operators to develop adequate operating plans and to obtain sufficient bonds to cover estimated reclamation needs. The frequency of inspections of ongoing operations will be commensurate with their size and complexity and will ensure adequacy of operating plans and identify unforeseen environmental impacts. Reclamation of disturbed areas to a productive condition will be required in all cases."

** Described in Chapter3 of the Nez Perce and Clearwater Forest Plans.*

**** Include anyrelevantForestwide Standardsfound in Chapter 2 of the Forest Plans as well.***

Is the projectin a designated Idaho Roadless Area (IRA)?Yes

If yes, which one?Mallard

** Fillin the 'Project in Roadless Area' table below, ANDcomplete a Briefing Paper.Provide the completed Briefing Paper to the Environmental Coordinator (Zoanne Anderson) and Brian Riggers PRIOR TO SCOPING.*

Is the project in a congressionally designatedarea, ex. Wilderness Area, Wild & Scenic River Corridor, Research Natural Area, Historic Trail, etc.? No

If yes, which one(s)?

For projects that occur in a* ***Wilderness Area**,contact Carol Hennessey, carol.hennessey@usda.gov, 935-4270, BEFORE submitting this proposal, to discuss howthe project may affect the designated area.*

** For projects that occur in a****Wild and Scenic River Corridor****, contact Chris Noyes, chris.noyes@usda.gov, 935-4289, BEFORE submitting this proposal, to discuss how theproject may affect thedesignated area.*

** For projects that occur in a****Research Natural Area****, contact Mike Hays, mike.hays@usda.gov, 935-4285, BEFORE submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

** For projects that occur in the* ***Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark****, contact Steve Lucas, steve.lucas@usda.gov, 963-4212, BEFORE submitting this proposal, to discuss how the project may affect the designated area.*

Are there Floodplains or Wetlands in the project area? Yes

Are there Municipal Watersheds in the project area? No

If yes, which one?

Is the project located in an RHCA? Yes

Describe the Existing Conditions of the project area.

The project area lies partly in an area of historical placer mining in the Bagley Creek drainage. The area is vegetated with a mixture of upland and riparian vegetation and timber consists of mixed species. Numerous roads and trails exist from historic mining and timber related activities. Some evidence of historic mining activities exist in the area.

What is the Purpose and Need for the proposed action*?

The Forest Service's purpose in proposing this action (approval of the Proposed Action) is to minimize adverse environmental impacts on resources by regulating the functions, work, and activities connected with the plan for mineral exploration activities on NFS lands. The compelling need for the Forest Service to take this action is to comply with legal requirements in response to the proposed Plan of Operations (as defined in 36 CFR 228.5) and to ensure that "operations are conducted so as, where feasible, to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources" (as defined in 36 CFR 228.8).

Laws governing activities on National Forest System lands provide the public a statutory right to conduct locatable mineral exploration, provided activities are reasonably incidental to mining and comply with other Federal laws and regulations (i.e. 1872 Mining Law as amended, 1897 Organic Act, 1955 Mining Act, and case law). The purpose of this project is to approve Ray Fridley's Plan of Operations (Plan) to explore for mineral resources on National Forest System lands in the area of the proposed action. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the Forest Service is required to determine whether to approve the Plan, as proposed, or to require changes or additions to the Plan deemed necessary to minimize adverse environmental effects and to provide for reclamation of surface resources (36 CFR Part 228A).

Describe the Proposed Action.

Ray Fridley proposes the excavation of approximately 8-10 test pits for the purpose of testing placer gravels for mineral values. The project area is located in the Bagley Creek drainage, in Sections 6 and 7, Township 26N, Range 9E, Boise Meridian. These test pits will be dug with a John Deere 70D excavator or similar sized excavator to bedrock, if possible, and will be sized a maximum of 12' X 12' to a maximum depth to bedrock. Material will then be processed with a small wash plant, which will discharge processed materials and water back into a series of two small settling ponds. Process water will initially be drawn from Bagley Creek then will be recirculated from the settling ponds and reused. When finished, the pit will be refilled with material, topsoil will be replaced, and the affected area will be reseeded and mulched as needed. Only one pit will be open at a time in order to minimize the amount of reclamation bond. A second option would be to process materials directly back into the test pit and use it as a settling pond. This technique would preclude the need for discrete settling ponds.

Access will be by existing roads and trails.

A single crossing point on Bagley Creek and an approximately a 50' wet area will be required to reach the project area. The operator proposes laying a series of planks or dead tree poles across the wet area forming a corduroy trail to drive on. Planks or dead trees will be used to create a temporary bridge across the creek in order to minimize surface disturbance and to avoid driving equipment through the stream channel. This structure will be removed once work is complete. An appropriate buffer of at least 20' will be maintained between any surface disturbance and adjacent streams or wetland areas where possible. Some dead and/or down timber may be removed for access and safety. A number of small trees may need to be removed to clear space for work. These will be cut down and piled to one side, then scattered about the immediate area and left in place when work is finished. Merchantable sized trees will not be removed without prior review and authorization from the District Ranger. A standard set of mitigation measures has been developed for exploration proposals of this type and will be implemented as appropriate. In addition, Idaho Best Management Practices for Mining will be adhered to. A field review with the operator will be necessary before the project is initiated to identify locations for implementation of site specific mitigation measures.

Equipment used in the operation includes a John Deere 70D Low Ground Pressure excavator, a small wash plant with sluice boxes, and water pumps and related support equipment. Pickups and ATVs will be used for access and to haul supplies to the site. Camping will be on privately owned land in Dixie.

A reclamation bond appropriate to the operation will be calculated by the Forest Service. A bond sufficient to cover all needed reclamation will be submitted by the operator before the Plan of Operation is approved and before work may begin.

A water permit will be obtained from the Idaho Department of Water Resources before water may be drafted from any stream located on Forest Service lands.

Access to the project area is from Dixie on Forest Road 222 to Forest Road 1190 (Jack Mountain Road) to Road 1190B. A primitive road/trail from 1190B runs overland through an clearcut to the project site. This road is open to within 100' of Bagley Creek. A temporary trail up to 200' long (including the aforementioned crossing) may be required from this point to access the work site. This temporary trail will be reclaimed when work is complete.
This project is currently proposed for the spring and summer of 2021 and may extend through the 2022 operating season, depending on weather and timing. Duration of the operation will be one year or less.

List the Design Feature / Mitigation Measures* to be included with the Proposed Action.

SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AT BOTTOM OF FORM

Small NEPA IDT/resource specialists are listed below. Contact them if you have any questions regarding their resource for your project.

Botany – Mike Hays, mike.hays@usda.gov; 983-4028
Fisheries – Derrick Bawdon, derrick.bawdon@usda.gov; 963-4211
Heritage – Christy Mog, christy.mog@usda.gov; 935-4269
Hydrology –TBD
Minerals – Marty Jones, martin.jones@usda.gov; 983-5158
Recreation – Carol Hennessey, carol.hennessey@usda.gov; 935-4270
Soils – Alex Rozin, alexandra.rozin@usda.gov, 842-2100
Wild and Scenic River – Chris Noyes, chris.noyes@usda.gov; 935-4251
Wildlife – Jim Lutes, james.r.lutes@usda.gov; 963-4202

Small NEPA Planner – Jeff Chynoweth, james.chynoweth@usda.gov; 935-4260

PROJECT MAPS and SHAPEFILES

Please send–per the instructions outlined below – a GIS-generated map ormaps of theproject area (pdf format only) withthe project submission.

- **Make sure that the map layers can be turned on / off / are editable.**
- **Make sure the map(s) can fit on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.**

1. Provide at least one map, **preferably"portrait" orientation**, with the project area / features as:
   - a Point, e.g. culvert, bridge, etc.,
   - a Line, e.g. fence, road, creek, etc., and/or
   - a Polygon, e.g. stand boundaries, treatment areas, etc.
     - Do not use a pointif treating an area, use a polygon.
     - Points/lines/polygons need to be distinct and easily found on the map.
     - The project area / siteneeds to be centered on the map, especially if only one area/feature.
2. Please **use the Forest Visitor Map as your map's baselayer**.
   - Do not add contour lines to the FV map unless needed for clarifying the proposed action. Contour lines can make the map difficult to read.
     - If contour lines are needed, make sure they are distinguishable from other linear features such as roads, trails, streams, etc.
   - A topo map canbe substituted for the FV map. If using a topo map but the contour lines are not important the topo lines should be light gray or opaque.
   - Regardless of base map, make sure there are identifiable elements, e.g. towns, roads, streams, etc. on the map to help locate the project area on the landscape and that the elements are clearly labeled.
3. The **preferredmap scaleis whatever scale best presents theproject area's location andproposed activities**:
   - If the 1:24K scale is too small (i.e. the project feature(s)– point/line/polygon –would be hard to find or would be indistinguishable on just one map), use a larger scaleto show the overall project area (coarse scale map) and smaller scaled maps to show the projectfeatures (fine scale map).
   - If the 1:24K scale is too big (i.e. the project featureis a tiny point or thin line lost/hard to find on the larger landscape), use a smaller scale to highlight the featurewhile ensuring there are elements on the map to identify the project's location.
   - If you need to make additional maps, please make as few as possible.
4. At a minimum, **all maps should include**:
   - Title (project name and district name only (please);
   - Legend (featuresclearly labeled)
   - Scale (ending in half miles, e.g.0__0.25__0.5 miles,or infull miles, e.g.0__0.25__0.5__1.0 miles)
   - North Arrow
     - Display the above inboxes with a black outline and a white background (not gray or yellow)
     - Do not 'Halo'the text or numbers or anything else on the map.Please.
     - The Scale needs to be large enough to read the numbers.
5. Finally, please **include the mapmakers name and the date it was created on the map**.

The Map(s) you provide will be used for Scoping the Public and the Tribes and in the Decision document. Please make sure they show – clearly, effectively, and professionally – what activity or activities are being proposed and where they are located on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

SHAPEFILES

The resource specialists require the shapefile(s) of the project's proposed activities before they will conduct their analyses. Providing the shapefile does not substitute for providing a pdf map.

The Project Proponent needs to send the shapefile,or a location where the shapefile can be found, to the Small NEPA Planner (currently: jjchynoweth@usda.gov) bythe time or shortly after the District Ranger submits this form.

- Shapefilesneed to includetheProject Name and have the Feature (culvert, bridge, etc.)labeled.
- Shapefilesneed toinclude the following extensions – .dbf, .prj, .sbn, .shp, .shx, and .xml.

Projects in Roadless Area

What is the Inventoried Roadless Area name? Mallard 847	**Forest Plan IRA Name*(if different)*:**
Identify the Idaho Roadless Management Classification: • *Wild Land Recreation* • *Special Areas of Historic or Tribal Significance* • *Primitive* • *Backcountry Restoration* • *General Forest, Rangeland and Grassland*	**Classification(s):** Backcountry Restoration Non CPZ Total area: 19,600 acres Roadless direction for this classification states "Surface use and occupancy for mineral activities--permitted if allowed in the land management plan." The project falls within Management Area 12, which gives no specific direction for minerals management. See Management Area block above for general Forest Plan direction, which allows for locatable minerals activities.
Does the project involve constructing or reconstructing roads? No *If yes, see *http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2* then navigate to Subpart C 294.23	
Does the project involve cutting trees? Yes* **If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2*then navigate to Subpart C 294.24	
Does the project involve removing minerals, including common variety minerals? Yes **If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2*then navigate to Subpart C 294.25	

JC : 8/21/2020

Additional Information:

Design Criteria / Mitigation Measures * to be included with the Proposed Action.

General Requirements (NOTE: These are general requirements for mining related activities. Not all listed requirements are relevant to this proposed action. All requirements that are relevant to this proposal will be adhered to.)

1. Notify District Ranger or minerals administrator at least 48 hours before any work is to begin.

2. Wash all vehicles and equipment used at the site before being brought onto National Forest system lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds, seeds or propagules.

3. Avoid disturbance of wetlands and stream riparian zones.

4. Avoid working on saturated soils. Exploration activities must cease to avoid sedimentation into intermittent streams if excessive storm water or ground water runoff is occurring.

5. Prevent discharge of water into any live stream or wetland. To avoid erosion and discharge impact to streams, all activities (including drilling, construction of pads, hand-dug sumps, and any overland travel) will be kept at least 164 feet (50 m) from flowing water that is down gradient.

6. Place weed free straw bales or install silt fence in places as identified by a Forest Service representative to minimize sediment migration from stockpiles and disturbed ground.

7. Obtain prior approval from the Forest Service for cutting or removal of trees or other large live vegetation. Downfall may be removed as needed.

8. Set aside cleared slash and green vegetation (e.g., bear grass) during test pit construction. Remove vegetation in clumps, if possible, with the soil mass intact. Store excavated topsoil and subsoil in separate stockpiles to be used during reclamation. Temporarily replant vegetation clumps in the topsoil stockpile.

9. Maintain only one (1) active pit or trench open at any one time. Reclamation may be occurring at one (1) other pit or trench concurrently.

10. To help alleviate the need for field crew to decide if fish are present in water withdrawal locations, a 1/8” screen will be installed on pump intake hoses even when utilizing a 5-gallon bucket with drilled holes. Water withdrawals will be located on small, high gradient streams as far up creek drainages as feasible to avoid habitat used by fish and sourced from streams under existing permits from the State of Idaho.

11. Collect process water in the existing pit. Regulate discharge to prevent overtopping the pit, and/or land apply excess water on a site designated by the Forest Service. Application sites will typically be natural sumps or depressions, pits or trap(s) that avoid impacts to wetlands or streams and

minimizes impacts to other surface resources. Application rate will be such that overland flow is avoided and a natural infiltration occurs through forest duff.

12. Backfill and reclaim each test pit as soon as testing has been completed for that site.

13. Follow the State of Idaho Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all surface disturbing activities, reclamation, and abandonment. BMPs are outlined in the Best Management Practices for Mining in Idaho (Idaho BMPs) (Idaho Department of Lands, et al. 1992).

14. Report accidents or injuries to the Forest Service within 24 hours.

15. Develop hazardous materials and spill prevention plan and submit it to the District Ranger prior to operations.

16. Store no more than 50 gallons of fuel or oil in the project area. Store all fuel or oil in a covered secondary containment system that limits spills to the environment and is capable of 110% volume of stored products. Fuel must be stored 328 feet (100m) from flowing water. Spills kits must be located at all refueling or fuel transfer locations.

17. Remove all equipment, garbage and trash resulting from the operation from National Forest system lands prior to October 1, the end of the regular operating season. Dispose garbage and trash at a State of Idaho approved site.

18. Use and maintain a sanitary facility (e.g., porta-potty or self-contained camper) at the project area while operations are ongoing.

19. Comply with all applicable Federal and State fire laws and regulations and take all reasonable measures to prevent and suppress fires on the area of operations and require employees, contractors and subcontractors to do likewise (36 CFR 228.11).

20. If any previously undiscovered threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species are encountered at any point in time prior to or during the implementation of this project, a Forest Service District Biologist will be consulted and appropriate measures will be enacted.

21. If accidental take occurs from any previously undiscovered threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species, all work must cease and a Forest Service District biologist notified.

22. Human food and garbage will be stored in an enclosed and secure area to avoid conflict with wildlife.

Cultural Resources:
If previously undiscovered cultural resources (historic/prehistoric objects, artefacts or sites) are exposed as a result of operations, cease operations until notification is received from a Forest Service archeologist or the District Ranger that the Forest Service and the operator has complied with provisions for mitigating unforeseen impacts as required by 36 CFR 228.4(e) and 36 CFR 800.

Reclamation:

1. Restoring subsoil and topsoil to existing natural ground contour.

2. Replanting beargrass clumps or other vegetation in topsoil.

3. Placing locally available slash and duff over topsoil and around beargrass clumps or other replanted vegetation.

4. Seeding and mulching disturbed areas with appropriate seed mix and certified weed free straw.

5. Refill the test pits and trenches in the reverse order overburden was removed.

6. Perform reclamation concurrently with the operation. Test pits, trenches and associated trails will be reclaimed as soon as practicable when testing is completed at a site.

Reclamation Bond and Water Right:

1. A reclamation bond must be received for this proposal by the Forest Service before work can begin. Bond amount will be calculated by the minerals administrator in an amount sufficient to cover the costs to reclaim the site to pre-project condition.

2. Obtain any necessary permits prior to approval of the Plan of Operations.

3. Seasonal closeout and reclamation must be completed no later than October 1. This is to ensure that all equipment is removed from the site and reclamation is complete before winter weather sets in.

4. Once the Forest Service receives the bond, the Plan of Operations may be approved.

Design Criteria and Mitigation Measures:
This project includes design criteria to protect water quality. These are not all-inclusive, as the Forest Plan standards are incorporated by reference (USDA Forest Service 1987, as amended).

1. Where water is used to process mineral samples onsite using sump or settling ponds, place silt fences or other suitable erosion control devices between the pond and live waters (including streams, creeks, and wetlands) such that sediment laden water is not delivered directly to these waters. Process water should infiltrate naturally and be allowed to flow through forest duff.

2. Do not locate excavation pits and spoils piles (temporary or permanent) within any existing wetland.

3. Replant all disturbed soils as soon as possible to minimize soil erosion.

4. Do not remove dead, dying or downed coarse woody debris from any RHCA.

5. Where feasible, incorporate the existing woody debris and vegetation located onsite into the soil to maintain organic matter content and long-term soil productivity.

6. Do not construct structures (sheds, shelters, etc.) in any wetland or floodplain within the project area.

7. If existing native surface roads are used for access, reconstruct water bars on the native surface project roads prior to the end of the operating season. Follow guidelines and typical drawings, as specified.

8. Do not remove, disturb, or damage any in-stream fish habitat structure; e.g., log jam, rock cluster, etc. If necessary, for prudent or safe operations to do so, notify the Forest such that the District or Forest fisheries biologist may inspect the proposed changes to fish habitat.

9. Where necessary to maintain sanitation facilities on-site, do not locate facilities closer than 50 feet to any lake, stream, river or wetland; and have spill prevention control and countermeasures so effluent from the facility does not reach any lake, stream, river or wetland.

10. If the total oil or oil products storage at a work site is to exceed 1,320 gallons or if a single container; e.g., fuel truck or trailer, exceeds a capacity of 660 gallons, the purchaser shall prepare and implement a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan. The SPCC plan will meet applicable EPA requirements (40 CFR 112), including certification by a registered professional engineer. (SFP: FW-119, 120, 122).